GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4529
ANSWERED ON:22.04.2002
LOSS DUE TO ATTACKS OF ELEPHANTS
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Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the States where natural habitats of elephants are found in India alongwith the number of elephants in each State;

(b) the details of incidents of exodus of elephants from their States alongwith the extent of loss of life and property caused by their attacks on human lives during the last three years; and

(c) the details of action taken to check such incidents alongwith the results obtained therefrom?

Answer

MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU)

(a) Wild elephants are found in 17 States / Union Territories in the country. The names of these States / U.Ts along with the latest estimates about their elephant population are as follows:

State /U.T.	Number
Arunachal Pradesh	1607
Assam	5312
Meghalaya	1840
Nagaland	147
Mizoram	28
Manipur	10-15
Tripura	30-50
West Bengal	327
Jharkhand	618
Orissa	1827
Uttaranchal	1507
Uttar Pradesh	70-100
Tamilnadu	2971
Karnataka	6088
Kerala	5737
Andhra Pradesh	73
Andaman & Nicobar	40-70
Total	28232-28317

(b) The home ranges of elephants are quite large and very often their range transcends the boundaries of the States. As such, the inter-state movement of elephants is a normal phenomenon. Details of damage caused by elephants during the last three years (1999-2000, 2000-01 and 2001-02), as provided by the Chief Wildlife Wardens of the concerned States, is given below.

State/U.T.	Human Deaths	Crop Damage	Remarks
Arunachal Pradesh	2	1181 cases	4 injured
Assam	131	Not assessed	-
Meghalaya	7	1914 ha	349 huts
Nagaland	12	2801 ha	108 huts
Mizoram	1	Not reported	-
Tripura	1	Not reported	-
West Bengal	156	8129 ha	3300 huts
Jharkhand	84	1550 cases	Till Dec.2001
Orissa	108	3240 ha	1227 huts
Uttaranchal	10	291 ha	4 injured

Chattisgarh	13	Not reported	-
Tamilnadu	51	671 cases	18 injured
Karnataka	86	26031 cases	Till Oct.2001
Kerala	12	Not reported	-
Andhra Pradesh	1	12 ha	-
Andaman & Nicobar	3	Not reported	-
Total	678 persons	16387 ha + 29433 cases	-

(c) The usual methods adopted by the State Forest Departments for dealing with the problem of depredation by elephants comprise the following :

1. Chasing away elephants with the use of crackers, search lights, drums etc.

2. Scaring away elephants by deploying trained elephants (i.e. kunkis).

3. Creating elephant-proof barriers (trenches and energized fencings).

4. Proclamation and elimination of confirmed human-killers under Section 11 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act,1972.

5. Translocation of problematic elephants using tranquilizing equipments.
6. Capture and domestication of problematic elephants under Section 12 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act,1972.

7 Payment of ex-gratia for loss of human life and property.

All these methods are short-term measures and they provide immediate relief to the victims of elephant depredation. Efficacy of these measures depends upon many factors. Elephants tend to become immune to crackers and searchlights in the long run. Most of the States lack sufficiently trained elephants (kunkis) and expert staff capable of capturing elephants and handling tranquilizing equipments. The translocated elephants sometimes have a tendency to return to their home range. Domestication of elephants is limited due to restricted demand for such elephants. Elephant-proof trenches and energized fencings need regular maintenance and protection against damage by miscreants. In some States, the rate of payment of ex-gratia for loss of human life and property is insufficient and the process involved is often complicated and time consuming

The long term measures for dealing with the problem comprise: protection and improvements of habitat by planting fodder species for elephants, freeing the corridors used by elephants for their movements from human interference and motivating the farmers to cultivate such cash crops as are not favoured by the wild elephants.

Government of India provides financial assistance to the State Governments under Project Elephant for both short-term and long-term measures for dealing with elephant depredation. Government of India has also advised the State Governments to enhance the rate of payment of ex-gratia in case of human deaths caused by wild animals to Rs. 1 lakh. Government of India has provided Rs.52.43 Crores to the States under the Project since its inception in 1992.